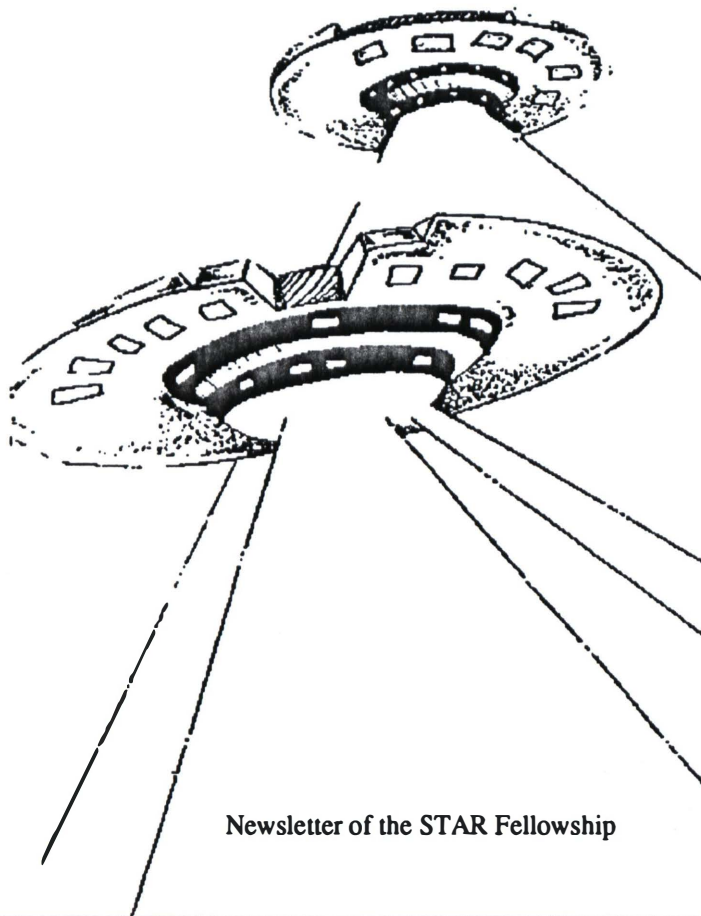


*AMSKAYA*



Newsletter of the STAR Fellowship

## IS ANYONE OUT THERE?

This question, in slightly varying forms, seems to be one that is being posed a lot at the moment. New Scientist asked it in its May 25th issue, as the title of an article on a new SETI project (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) beginning in 1992, co-ordinated at the Ames Research Centre, California and headed by John Billingham.

The article seems to indicate relaxing views regarding life beyond the Earth, compared with a previous article which suggested that only planets with a giant satellite like Earth's Moon, and existing at a distance from the Sun where conditions are right, can have life - an almost impossible situation to duplicate.

This article, however, although still insisting on the "life-band" idea, suggests that this may be much wider than previously thought. If Earth was in the orbit of Mars, its atmosphere's greenhouse effect could allow it to support life, the author argues, and likewise if Mars was in Venus's orbit it might well be habitable. Rather a lot of bad luck really! But at least it is suggesting that, with wider life-bands, life could be more widespread in the universe than previously thought.

The author also believes that, given Earth-like conditions, life would be likely to arise - in other words, it was not a million-to-one freak accident, but something which would naturally happen given the right conditions. This again is a more optimistic view than previous ideas.

But perhaps the greatest jump in thought is the idea of convergent evolution:

*Extraterrestrial species will always be different from ours. But they may have general characteristics in common with each other and with Earth life.*

*At the molecular level, the need to store complex genetic information strongly suggests a need for long-chain molecules like DNA, even if not DNA itself. At a gross level, animals need to take in information about their surroundings, to find food and avoid predators, suggesting the evolution of organs that can make use of the available light. Life on Earth is rich in examples of convergent evolution, in which organisms from different genetic stock have developed similar form and function in response to similar evolutionary pressures. Eyes, for example, have evolved independently in at least 40 different groups of animals. Similarly, the placental mammals of South America and the marsupial mammals of Australia have both evolved species that fit the niches of moles, mice, flying squirrels and anteaters elsewhere.*

*According to Billingham, the idea that convergent evolution might also happen between the faunas of different planets should not be dismissed lightly. Remember that we are, after all, restricting the discussion to Earth-like planets, orbiting Sun-like stars, so any organs of vision, for example, will use much the same wavelengths of light as we receive from our Sun. Perhaps we should expect general characteristics such as bilateral symmetry, photosynthesis, sexual reproduction, brains and intelligence to be commonplace on such planets.*

Even more optimistic:

*Even if our kind of intelligence is associated with just one star in every 100 000 of the same type as our Sun, then there are 400 000 technological civilisations in our Galaxy alone. Life can be a rare happening in terms of the percentage of stars involved, but still be abundant in a galaxy. And: If the project finds one source of extraterrestrial intelligence, there will surely be many. It is difficult to imagine circumstances which could lead to the existence of only two civilisations in the Universe, and it is likely that we could learn about others from the first one we contact. We could, perhaps, tune in to many other civilisations, once their presence is known, through*

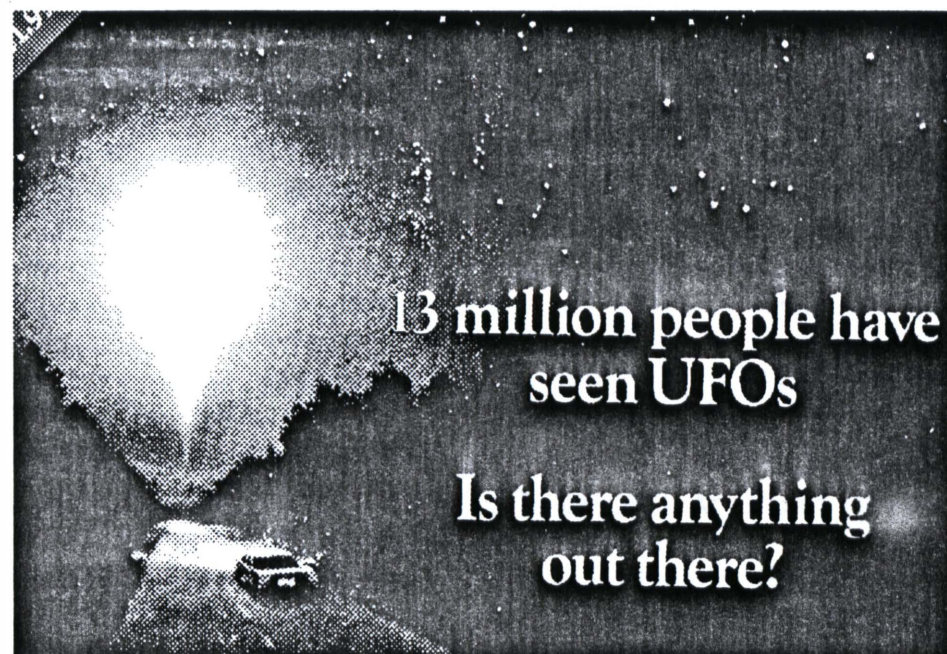
*a network of communicating intelligences. One of the most fascinating things that such a cosmic network will communicate is information about the beings that operate it. For the Earth-bound biologist, the prospect of understanding a single case of extraterrestrial life is exciting enough; having many to study is a compelling prospect. The extraterrestrials themselves may be equally interested in learning about our own biology.*

Another article, entitled "Is there anybody there?" appeared in Woman's Realm for June 17th. It was headed by a full-page picture of a crop circle with an inset of a UFO seen in New Mexico: It is the fairly standard type of article beginning with an assumed connection between crop circles and UFOs, and continuing to describe some sightings and UFO events, but nevertheless it is another indication that the question is fairly near the forefront of the public mind.

Since writing the preceding words, an article entitled "Is anybody out there? - We keep on listening" appeared in the Independent for July 8th. Once again about the new search project, it began with an interesting history of the search for life elsewhere, mentioning that Marconi and Tesla both thought they had received transmissions (had they?). It then continues to show the improvements the coming project will have over the last one in sky covering time.

It then jumps to the rather extraordinary idea of aliens sending "patterns" to make something like themselves, complete with memory!! (This idea is not new - it appeared many years ago in the television serial "A for Andromeda"). The assumption is, of course, that interstellar distances are not able to be crossed in reasonable times - I am sure this is what will date articles such as this in times to come.

Finally, a series on unknown mysteries by Time-Life Books was advertised by the picture on page 5. It seems that the idea of life elsewhere is gaining ground again.



## OUTSIDE HELP

by Tony Wedd

### Part 4

Winifred had given Philip some help with the yonskaler, indeed, she had been warned in her communications that she was to give help to a blind man, before she contacted him; but much of the basic principles were worked out by Philip himself. He asserted that it would occasionally flip over when he laid it down, and that it warmed him to hold it in his hand. Therefore he was able to modify the arrangement slightly to make two later machines, the "S One" or flying saucer, and the "Roswinga" which was specially for his mother.



I was given the specification for the S One, but regret that I have lost it now. He claimed that on a trip to the moors to test it, he had a whirlwind flare up close by him, but not actually under the S One, due perhaps to some fault in its construction. The power that he had so nearly conjured up under himself rather frightened him. However, I have the circuit of the roswinga, and at one time had the idea of making them for sale. Philip spent a lot of money obtaining a patent on his "Wenceslas Boots", there being some difficulty in establishing what he was patenting, and, for instance, whether he had to cover a six-point amskaya or an eight-pointed one or not.

The design was particularly given to him to help his mother, who suffered from poor circulation. She assured me they had worked wonders for her, and that as a result she could kneel down to say her prayers, and do the walk into Grindleford and back, which she had been unable to do previously. Later, Philip used to put his feet on them himself, as the heating effect was the equivalent of a 1000 watt bar fire on a cold day.

An interesting feature of the yonskaler was that it was "personalised": it worked for its owner particularly. He would not allow me to touch it, and I think that once he had taken over the roswinga from his mother, she did not use them again. He used to say that you had to handle the parts of the machine yourself to get them used to your vibrations, and certain types of tools assisted you, while others tended to undo the work. The slow deformation of a piece of metal was to be preferred to hammering, for instance, and he had a way of working sheets into three-dimensional bowls by going over them with a hand brace and a blunt tool.

To be continued

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### *Interview at Old Sarum*

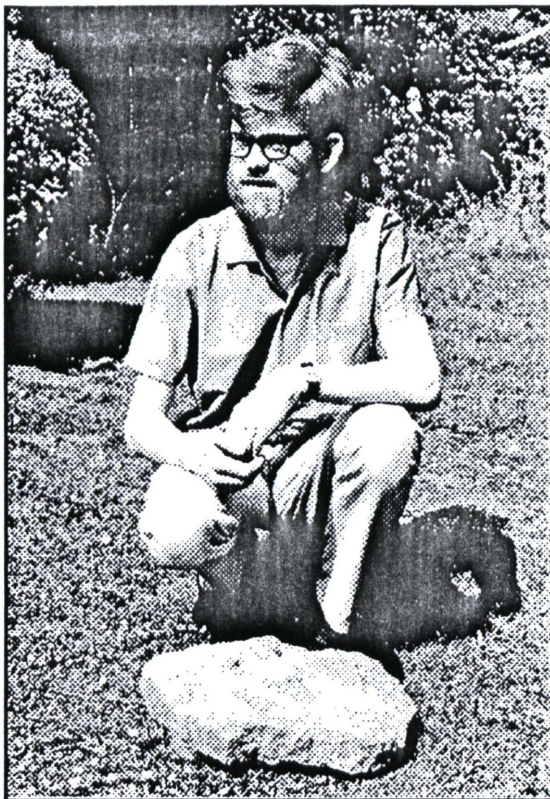
At the London Earth Mysteries field trip on July 27th, the group was interviewed by a reporter from City Limits on the implications of earth mysteries. I was asked some questions on the relevance of the idea of extraterrestrials.

On being asked my opinions of Erich von Daniken I replied that I thought there was a core of seemingly genuine extraterrestrial artefacts, but that I thought he had considerably embroidered on them. I cited the Piri Reis map (showing the outline of the land of Antarctica before this was confirmed by modern methods), and the case of the gold bracelet found in a lump of coal.

Then I was asked about extraterrestrial help in the construction of the ley system, and I gave my opinion that there may have been help from time to time, possibly in the form of hints, but that also the people of the time were quite capable of building on these hints to build a system. The reporter then asked why such help should be given, and I said I had had impressions that the original reason was that the earth was damaged in the remote past, possibly by a war which has come down to us as the fall of Atlantis. I said I felt they had also been working throughout history to bring mankind back to a better state of life and civilisation.

### *More marks on photographs*

When I went up in a hot air balloon last year, I was interested to see a round white spot in the sky on one of the pictures. This year, I had a flight in Concorde, and on some of those taken at the highest point (about ten miles up, near the edge of space and with the sky much darker than lower down), further similar spots appeared. None of the other pictures (the ones taken in Paris for instance) had similar blemishes, and, though I admit it could be wishful thinking to imagine that they may be spacecraft or unmanned scanners, I find the matter very interesting.



A very young me with the stone found in the field at Albury, Surrey following the sighting by Squadron-Leader Shipwright in 1969 of an egg-shaped object moving very low over the ground (the object was viewed from above, at Newlands Corner). A picture he took later of the site had a white spot in the sky similar to those described elsewhere in this issue.



**AMSKAYA** is the newsletter of the STAR Fellowship, a continuation of the organisation formed in 1960 by Tony Wedd of Chiddingstone, who held that contact was the way ahead for flying saucer investigation. £2 for four quarterly issues from J. Goddard, 25, Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15. 2PX. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard. Original cover design by David Taylor. IF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE AN "X" WILL FOLLOW THIS SENTENCE: